

Aquatic Invasive Species

Marine Fisheries, in cooperation with a multi-agency state/federal task force, is asking marine anglers and bait shops to help prevent the spread of harmful aquatic invasive species. These species, including a wide variety of non-indigenous plants and invertebrates, can disrupt the ecology of coastal environments by out-competing and displacing native species, or infecting them with diseases for which they have no resistance. Many serious shellfish predators and diseases, including the green crab and MSX, were introduced accidentally. Others, including plants and algae such as Codium, have been detached from the hulls of ships, or discharged with bilge water. In addition to these incidental introductions, many species are intentionally imported for use in Massachusetts waters. Live baits, such as shellfish, sea worms, and finfish are shipped here from other states and countries. The bait organisms themselves are potential problems, but, more importantly, their packaging, bedding materials and any associated water may contain invasive species, including algae, invertebrates such as crabs, and microorganisms.

The following are some simple steps you can take to prevent the introduction and spread of potentially damaging aquatic invasive species:

- Carefully remove all plant material from boats and trailers before leaving a launching ramp.
- Dispose of all unused bait and bait packing materials in a trash receptacle upon returning from your outing. Unused bait should never be discarded in a waterway.
- Avoid transporting live shellfish or shellfish waste between water bodies. All shellfish material should be disposed of in an appropriate land-side receptacle.

By exercising these minimal precautions, you can help ensure the viability of the coastal habitats and nursery areas that support your favorite sport fish, and help keep access sites clean. For more information on this issue, please visit www.NortheastANS.org



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